

## Lessons Learned Record of Interview

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LLP01 – Strategy and Planning				
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<b>Key Topics:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S/CRS Early Years and Missteps</li> <li>• Secretary of State Colin Powell’s Decision</li> <li>• The Handbook and Lessons Learned Documents</li> <li>• Staffing Requirements</li> <li>• S/CRS and the Civil Response Corps</li> <li>• Garnering Leadership’s Attention</li> <li>• Lessons Learned</li> </ul>				

### S/CRS Early Years and Missteps

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*“Everything done in the first two years was lost and never used again.”*

When [Secretary of State Colin] Powell started S/CRS, he told [REDACTED] not to work on Afghanistan or Iraq since major portions of his organization were already devoted to these places. We could talk to people upon their return from either of the countries about their experiences, but we were not to administer a program. Our intention was to learn how to coordinate across the interagency and to

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orchestrate resources to countries all over the world. To begin, we looked at conflicts, such as Bosnia and Somalia, starting from the mid-1980s up until 2004. We saw that there were about three or four significant conflicts that took place every year. We did not look at the country level but more at the system and how the government coordinated both internally and with international actors like the United Nations. The U.S. is not in a position to sustain all of these transitions on its own and needed allies.

### Secretary of State Colin Powell's Decision

It [Colin Powell's decision to have S/CRS not administer programs in either Afghanistan or Iraq] was completely realistic. There already were coordinating offices for both Afghanistan and Iraq [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

*"There was never a commitment or interest to assign people to the office [S/CRS] to undertake a massive efforts, like what was going on in Afghanistan and Iraq."*

It would have been completely unrealistic for S/CRS to take on this job when there had not been any work on coordinating or developing the analysis needed for planning there was no prior work processes in place. We could not develop all the procedures and materials necessary and then still play an operational role in either country. We [S/CRS] became a foundation for coordination and lessons learned.

There was no planning or established mechanism or procedures. We tried to bring people together like how [James] Dobbins worked through the Balkans. At the time, there had been little effort to bring together the civilian and military into a single planning process or response [to a crisis]. There was no idea about what personnel skills were needed to effectively address a country in conflict. If one looks at any country, there was no way to get enough people in one entity to effectively respond.

### The Handbook and Lessons Learned Documents

We then asked what are the lessons learned during various stages of conflict and recovery from conflict. CSIS had this matrix for transition planning and they gave us permission to take that and develop it into a handbook. This handbook was created to identify key transition issues one might come across in the field and how to transition from the early stages of conflict into recovery. It is critical to understand these phases of transition.

*"If we had asked questions concerning infrastructure, security, governance, who/how would the conflict be managed, and how it would be financed at the outset in [Iraq and Afghanistan], they might have led some people to have second thoughts on how the interventions would have gone."*

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In creating these documents, we did interagency consultations where participants would debate the critical issues and we developed guidelines for coordination between civil society and the military. This work was done primarily with the U.S. Institute for Peace took about a year to accomplish. The goal was to create ways for civil society to be able to communicate with the military and how to de-conflict operations on the ground.

### Staffing Requirements

With three to four conflicts going on at once, we would have had to drain people from the entire government in order to respond; it would also be hard to have just S/CRS do this. We need to get people from the governments who are or were involved in the regular decision making process. We needed to learn about how to build relationships and start recruiting.

What we need to do is create a group of about 50 senior people, from either inside or outside of government, who know how to deal with conflict operations (such as James Dobbins, or John Herbst). The idea would be to draw them in and make them the coordinator for a specific conflict or policy issue; the S/CRS coordinator can't coordinate all conflicts - it would mean failure. We need to train this range of senior government officials based on previous experiences. We don't just need smart people trying to re-invent the wheel every time.

### S/CRS and the Civil Response Corps (CRC)

The idea for the levels of personnel needed for the CRC were laid out in the planning documents. The levels are:

1. Senior leadership group to guide and manage operations.
2. Interagency personnel with a certain minimum degree of training in conflict response. These would all be volunteers and each would have to serve a minimum number of years. This group would be able to step in once we constituted a planning group around a certain issues.
3. Non-governmental personnel similar to the military response corps capacity within the reserves or guard. It would allow the office to draw on civilians which were trained to mobilize like the military. Civilians would be identified from critical skill areas.

One critical civilian area is within building the police. We had a capacity with INL (the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs) through their contractors. We needed to create this capacity within the reserve corps, but (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) there was no real interest or financial commitment to do this. There was high rhetoric for such needs, but no commitment to do it. There was no commitment because of a tight budget and then when it came down to deciding how to spend limited resources the money would generally get put in the two places of immediate concern - Afghanistan and Iraq [not into building S/CRS Civilian Response Corps]. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

One example of how S/CRS could have helped was with the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. There were a lot of bombings on Lebanon and it was also a logical place to use S/CRS to coordinate civilian and humanitarian responses.

### Garnering Leadership's Attention

1) [In order to get the attention of leadership] you had to demonstrate that you had the relevant skills. I tried to do that with Afghanistan and in Haiti (in 2005). [Secretary of State Condoleezza] Rice handed the Haiti response over to S/CRS for election planning and transition and coordinated with the U.N. Mission in Haiti and with the U.N. in New York. The Secretary [of State] must have

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trust and confidence in the persons doing the lead role of coordinating and if the Secretary turns to the regional bureau [to do the coordination] then there is limited space for a coordination body like S/CRS unless it is an enlightened regional bureau and requests it.

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3) Demand for resources must also be pulled from the top, bottom-up will always fail.

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requirements for people and resources and Secretary Clinton said Ok. She bought the story, mission and rationale – with that, we got the resources and the people. Patrick Kennedy was tasked to find 50 staff members for us and there was a real recognition of our resource requirement and she [Secretary Clinton] used us and drew on us for energy policy. Secretary Clinton would give us a challenge and we would put a team together. She made it clear to others that we were acting for her.

Personality is part of it, but also is trust within the institution. Secretaries of State have a natural inclination to pivot toward the regional bureaus and that is fine. The regional bureaus do need to be involved but they are not trained to mount a team of people with the experiences and the lessons learned from other places to effectively address conflict. The CRSG [Country Reconstruction and Stabilization Group] planning unit proposed to have individuals with lots of experience and training to be point and then would coordinate with the regional bureaus and CRS would draw bodies from the regional bureaus and the CRC. The requirements from this team would then be fed to the National Security Council and the Deputies/Principals Committees to get outside of State. While this didn't happen there were other success like James Dobbins in the Balkans in the 1990's and it showed how one person made a huge difference.

### Lessons Learned

- 1) The critical requirement is to have one clearly identified body to drawn in all the interagency inputs and put that into a coordinated plan. The Afghan Coordination Cell is doing it but I am unsure how well it is going.
- 2) Go back to reconstitute those lessons learned papers.
- 3) We need to know how to create effective civilian policing capacity in order to transition the idea of the rule of law. It must be driven by civilian institutions not the military – we failed on this in Afghanistan and Iraq. We may have been more successful at this in Bosnia only because we had a commitment from the European Union and other states bidding for membership into the European Union. We need to know how to oversee a stable police transition.
- 4) We should look at how effects-based planning is interpreted differently by the military and civilian worlds. The military thinks it is what is needed to destroy a structure. The civilian world might see effects-based planning and effective administration of rule of law, which is much more complicated and may take a decade. How to plan and achieve results is fundamentally different between civilians and the military. When the military goes beyond their mission, they can't succeed on the civilian side. If one can't substitute international police for the military, have an intervention, stabilize the military and think that the capacity of the military is built within those three or five years. In addition, there is political pressure to withdrawal international military forces but there is no substitute; there is an immature local army and police and then three or four years later another disaster.

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We lie to ourselves a lot on how fast we can build local capabilities. [We underestimate the problem and politics] and there is pressure to remove the troops because of the costs involved. So we come up with a transition plan to shift rule of law to the locals. The Islamic State decimated the capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces and all the investments we made eroded.

*"When political pressure prevails [for troop withdrawal] you try to come up a response that is politically viable and still results in some degree of stability on the ground."*

### Follow-up Actions:

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| [REDACTED]